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The Child and the Church

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The Child and the Church

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INTRODUCTION.

Right doctrine is essential to right living. Our beliefs determine our characters; "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

This fact was emphasized by the Holy Spirit when He whispered to the Apostle Paul this message for his son-in-the-Gospel, Timothy:—"Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

These words of warning clearly imply that if Timothy should neglect the doctrine, his own spiritual life and that of his hearers, would be endangered or lost. He fortells that "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers; and they shall turn their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." This prophecy is fulfilled today by the attempt of the "New Theology" to substitute education for salvation, and in the denial of the fall of man and of his need of regeneration.

A careful reading of this volume will convince the reader that the author of this able and timely protest against the false teachings of today, can say, with the great Apostle to the Gentiles, whose name he bears, "I am set for the defense of the Gospel."

With profound reverence, matured scholarship, deep spiritual insight, knowledge of the inspired Word of God, unanswerable logic, and with Christian charity, he has defended some of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Church which have been assailed, not only by foes from without but also by those of Christ's own household.

One of the most valuable chapters in the book is the one in which the author proves his conclusion by facts from his personal religious experience. It is the picture of an honest soul in the supreme quest of life. The story is thrilling and describes in detail the struggle of years through which he passed, and through which many other thoughtful young people are passing today. May they, like the author, reach the goal and come into the same blessed experience of pardoned sins and fellowship with the living Christ.

This book has a message and a mission. No minister of the Gospel or Church official can afford to neglect it. It should be read and re-read until it grips the mind and the heart of the reader, and he is under constraint to "contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all delivered unto the saints."

AARON E. BALLARD,
Ocean Grove.

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CONTENTS.

I. The Child and the Church.

II. "Educational" or "Preventive Salvation", just what the new teaching is.

III. Bearing of the Scriptures toward the new teaching, in its denial of universal natural depravity.

IV. Bearing of Historic Christianity toward the new teaching in its denial of universal natural depravity.

V. Other failures of the new teaching from the point of view of Historic Christianity.

VI. The rise of the new teaching and a Christian construction of the facts upon which it is based.

VII. A Christian conception of the child, and of his relation to the Church.

VIII. A personal experience illustrating the new teaching, and its points of failure, and showing anew the deep and abiding truth of the Historic Faith.

IX. A final word.

Dedicated, in humble trusting devotion, to the Faith once for all delivered unto the saints, the Faith that was, and is and shall be the same; world without end, Amen.

I.

THE CHILD AND THE CHURCH.

I.

Historic Christianity puts a certain estimate upon all human nature; it teaches us to regard it in a particular way. What this estimate is, is stated in Christian Theology.

Again and again in these modern times we are called upon to put aside our theologies, and turn our attention to the child himself: and we do not object to the proposition; for the faith that is in the Church of Christ will certainly bear the test of facts. Some who have answered this call to study the child have considerably modified the Historic Faith; they have come to the conclusion that the Church has misunderstood the child; and so they have formulated both a new estimate of him, and a new plan of salvation, by which he is to come into his moral destiny. This new plan or program is variously named, "Cultural Salvation", "Educational Salvation", "Preventive Salvation". Our own discussion of this engaging subject, the relation between the child and the Church, will naturally be much concerned with the new teaching and program.

II.

EDUCATIONAL OR PREVENTIVE SALVATION, JUST WHAT THE NEW TEACHING IS.

II.

"Educational" or "Preventive Salvation,"—the term might be as old as Pelagius; for it puts the same estimate upon natural humanity that he did, but it is one of exceedingly recent origin. Because of its lack of Christian antiquity, it has no generally accepted meaning; and so we will have to work this out for ourselves, from those who have admitted their sympathy with this new propaganda in the Church. According to one prominent exponent of the theory, preventive salvation is the process by which a child can be trained up to Christian maturity, without there being any beginning or break in its relation to God. There are several things this exponent of the view does not mean to say, thus:

1. He does not mean by relation to God, conscious relation to Him; for he denies that consciousness of one's relation to God is an essential mark of the Christian.

2. Neither does he mean that the child's heart is right at the start, and is always right throughout his life; for he also denies that the rightness of the heart, of the emotions, is an essential mark of the Christian.

3. Neither does he mean that the child will grow up without sinning; for, as he puts it, "children sin and so do Christians."

He makes the single essential mark of the Christian to be a purpose of obedience toward duty as it is revealed in the Scriptures: the choosing of right is the one necessity, the renewing of the heart is not a necessity, and neither is the experiencing of a conscious relation to God.

As I understand his position, by "a child growing up without there being any break in its relation to God," he means that a child can grow up without there being any time when its will is in open enmity against the whole law of God, a time when it is in rebellion against His authority and means to be. There will be mutterings of rebel-

lion, in the refusal of particular commands, there will be deliberate sins; but the child will always recognize the right of God to rule in its life, and will be in a general way obedient to His authority. That this is not an equivalent of the New Testament conception of Christian character hardly needs to be stated, but some views of this new teaching are very much fuller.

Thus, the position taken by the Sunday School literature of some of the great Protestant denominations goes a great deal farther. It believes in the possibility of developing right emotions as well as right volitions, and the education of the emotions is a prominent feature in its program of work. As to a full supernatural Christian consciousness, this literature is not definite. It maintains that a loving trust in the kind Heavenly Father can be implanted in childhood, in the years when the child is naturally believing and trustful; it also emphasizes the prayer relation, and seeks to build into the child's heart a habit of prayerfulness; but in each case it would seem, that the interest is in prayer as a habit of the child, rather than as an effort through which God comes to act upon him. Its general position is that the child comes into the world with certain natural instincts and tendencies, and that others appear during the course of growth, and that if these are properly directed and right habits and principles of action are inculcated, the child's life will unfold naturally without a break, into a Christian maturity of love and service toward God and men.

There is in its teaching no emphasis upon sin. The unpleasant traits of children are looked upon as the expression of their natural instincts, which need only to be limited and regulated by education. That these unpleasant traits are expressions of a natural moral depravity, is denied, as is also any moral demerit in the actions themselves.

The possibility of regulating the child's instincts, by precept, example and inspiration, so as to achieve a well organized character, is confi-

dently asserted. Thus, pride, self will, and love are instincts of the child, some appearing at birth, some later; the proper regulation and correlation of these by various educational methods, is, in a word, the program of preventive salvation. A statement of this program in seven sentences will make the position clear.

1. Its basic truth is the denial of the native sinfulness of human nature. Morally, human nature starts neutral; it may develop either into righteousness or sin according to the training it receives.

2. Supplementary to this denial of native sinfulness, is its assertion of the native spirituality of human nature. Spiritual maturity is separated from natural birth only by a process of natural growth and a programme of education.

3. The first item in its educative program is the implantation of faith. This is done in the very early years when the child is still trustful and believing; it is taught then to confide in the kind Heavenly Father, whose loving care is over all his works. At this time also, and from this time on, the child is encouraged in prayer and worship. It is by such discipline in self expression that its natural spirituality is to be developed.

4. Through the entire period of growth the children are taught and trained in the details of right conduct, by this effort it is hoped to establish firmly in their lives right habits and principles of action.

5. During early adolescence their hearts are to be inspired by accounts of heroic service, and at this time Jesus is pictured to them as the noblest of heroes. This emphasis is expected to develop the child's natural altruism, and inspire him to acts of personal ministry and sacrifice.

6. During the same period of adolescence the details of right conduct, as set forth in the words and by the example of Jesus, are taught, and their application to modern life problems is encouraged.

7. Finally, at the age of decision, each child is

to be pressed to an act of self dedication to love and serve God and men. A quotation from a Sunday School periodical gives the spirit of this climax. "The genius of youth is altruism, a noble self-forgetfulness in service, and it is here that one soul kindles another, one heart another; so that the spirit and example of the teachers and officers (touched by the sacred fire from off the altar) needs must fall on the school in Pentecostal fulness." This baptism of the spirit and example of teachers and officers is offered as the equivalent of Christian Evangelism, yet the Holy Ghost is only indirectly involved, by His having inspired the hearts of the teachers and officers. From this point on the children are expected to live lives of noble service for men, their conduct constantly determined by firmly fixed habits and principles of action.

III.

BEARING OF THE SCRIPTURES TOWARD THE NEW TEACHING IN ITS DENIAL OF UNIVERSAL NATURAL DEPRAVITY.

III.

The inadequacy of this program as an expression of the Gospel of redemption and regeneration will be at once evident to many, the points at which it must be criticized are numerous; but that which is most fundamentally and most apparently mistaken is its denial of natural depravity. Children, it teaches, are born morally neutral, if they fall into sin they need redemption and regeneration, otherwise they do not.

The adherents of this new program are not very careful to relate their positions to the teachings of the word of God; but there are two passages from the synoptic Gospels, that are often quoted by them to support their denial of natural depravity. Of these passages the fullest texts are to be found in St. Mark 10:13 and in St. Matthew 18:3.

Turning now to St. Mark 10:13 we find the following:

"And they brought little children to Him, that He should touch them; and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them."

The first important matter to be determined is the force of the Greek word, "toiouton." Thayer's lexicon gives as its English equivalent the word, "such," and the phrase, "of this sort or kind," that is those having these general traits. We would render, then, the Master's words thus, "Of those having these general traits is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Two meanings are possible:

1. That Jesus sees in the child character a specimen of sainthood.

2. That Jesus sees in the child character some outstanding traits that are illustrative of sainthood.

The choice between these two meanings cannot be determined from the text itself, but must be determined by the context, and the general teaching of the Scriptures. Turning now to St. Matthew 18:3 we find that the Saviour, having made a very similar statement, "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," goes on to detail His exact meaning. "Whosever, therefore, shall humble himself as a little child the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." The context in this instance makes it clear that what Jesus sees in the child character is its humility. Take the entire incident. The disciples had been discussing which one of them should be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus replies by taking a little child and setting him in their midst, and then saying to them: only by becoming humble like the children, who play together without any disputes as to preeminence, shall you at all enter into the Kingdom; and the one who most perfectly embodies such humility will be the greatest in it.

Humility, then, as a trait of child life that is illustrative of sainthood, is clearly our Lord's meaning in St. Matthew, and He does not mean at all to say that children are naturally saints.

Returning now to the incident in St. Mark, we remember that here the context is the desire of certain mothers that Jesus should bless their children, and the proud aversion of the disciples to the idea. They felt that such an interest in children was beneath the dignity and importance of the Messianic King, and especially so then, when he was on his way to coronation. Jesus is displeased with this arrogant self importance of maturity toward little children; and so He reproves His disciples by renewing His former emphasis upon the

worth of childhood's outstanding trait, humility.

Thus He says to them, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of those having this general character is the kingdom of heaven." And then interpretatively He adds, "Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of Heaven as a little child shall not enter therein." His meaning seems perfectly clear, He says let the children come; for unless the disciples shall get free from their arrogance and self importance, and shall receive the Kingdom with that same simple humility that a child manifests in its common experiences, they shall not enter into it.

We cannot avoid a sense of amazement at the devotion of our friends to these two texts; one of which cannot by any means be made to support their belief, and the other only made to support it by first ignoring the context, and then carelessly rendering the text itself. Certainly Jesus did not mean to say that children are saints: but simply that humility, simplicity, and trustfulness, traits which little children conspicuously manifest in certain relations, are illustrations of the traits of character conditional to gaining a place in His Kingdom. One word further with respect to these two passages in the Gospels. It needs to be remembered, in any moral evaluation of these traits of young children, that they are purely impersonal, they are therefore morally of no more significance than a good memory; for nothing has any final moral worth unless it is a personally determined bearing.

But, if there is a poverty of Scriptural material at hand to support this new teaching,—that a child is by nature good,—there is no such embarrassment for those who maintain the opposite position. Beginning in the Old Testament with the book of Genesis, the whole weight of the Biblical testmony establishes the fact that all men are born with natures strongly set toward sin.

In Genesis 3:17-24 we read that man is banished

from the Garden of Eden, and put for all time under God's curse because of sin.

In Genesis 6:5-6 Jehovah estimates the human heart as continually evil, repents that He has made man, and purposes the flood.

In Genesis 8:21 Jehovah at the end of the flood estimates men similarly, "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."

In the later Penteteuchal books the whole system of laws and sacrifices contemplates the deep sinfulness of human nature. The historical books, while they do not teach anything theological, constantly present a picture of sin and failure that is so deep and universal that it requires heart sinfulness as its explanation.

Job in several passages expresses definitely this estimate of human nature thus:—chapter 14:4. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." Or again Job 15:14 "What is man that he should be clean? And he that is born of woman that he should be righteous?" And yet again in Job 15:16: "Man that is abominable and corrupt; man, that drinketh iniquity like water." These would be wildly extravagant expressions if nothing were intended beyong a confession that most men sin occasionally, and some men rather constantly.

The Psalter expresses the same idea in several places, thus, Psalm 14:2. "Jehovah looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek after God." "They are all gone aside * * * there is none that doeth good, no, not one." This passage appears a second time in Psalm 53. In Psalm 51:5 the Psalmist confesses, "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

In the book of Ecclesiastes there is the same idea, chapter 9:3 "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live."

Isaiah, in his sixth chapter, voices his sense of

universal sin and shame when he beholds the vision of Jehovah's glory saying, "Woe is me for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." And both in his 53d and 64th chapters he expresses a consciousness of deep universal and humanly hopeless sin.

Jeremiah in his 16th chapter and 12th verse pictures sin as a universal fact in the Israel of his day. And in the 17th chapter, verse 9, he speaks of sinfulness as if it were a characteristic trait of the human heart, thus, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt. Who can know it?"

Dr. W. B. Pope thus sums up the position of the Old Testament upon this subject, "It has been seen that the Old Testament maintains one consistent and uniform teaching concerning the nature of sin generally, and as to its universal power over mankind. The history of the flood gives its witness both in clear testimony and awful judgment. The covenant rite of circumcision significantly declares the hereditary sinfulness of man. The entire system of the Levitical economy was based on this assumption; for while its trespass offerings had more specific reference to individual offenses, its sin offerings had general reference to the deeper roots of universal sin. The Psalms and Prophets abound in testimony to the same effect, not only assuming the universality of past and present sin among men, but asserting it with equal confidence concerning the unlimited future, One Being only excepted, The Righteous Servant of Jehovah."

Coming to the New Testament we find this estimate of natural humanity to be its persistent teaching; and so abundantly and clearly is it expressed that only the strongest personal bias can possibly blind one's eyes to its truth.

In Matthew 7:11 Jesus says, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your chil-

dren, etc." Manifestly our Lord here specifically puts an estimate upon human nature, that it is universally evil.

As to His institution of Baptism and of the Supper, natural depravity must have underlaid them in His mind. Thus in the great commission Jesus empowers His apostles to disciple all men by the baptism of repentance; and in the supper they are all to eat and drink a memorial of His vicarious sacrifice for sin. Such words and such provisions would be quite inexplainable, if sin were not regarded both as universal and deeply seated. A gospel, in which through sacraments, a supreme emphasis is put upon the atonement for sin, and the washing of regeneration, must have as its presupposition the doctrine of the fall and consequent depravity of the race. But we are not left to argument and exigesis; for the Saviour in St. John's account of His teaching, has clearly formulated this doctrine.

Thus, St. John 3:5, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not, etc."

Or again in St. John 8:23, "Ye are from beneath, I am from above, ye are of this world, I am not of this world."

These passages need no interpretation, they speak clearly and sufficiently for themselves; but coming to some in which the presupposition of natural depravity, while clear, is not so definitely stated, we notice, in John 15:1: The Saviour under the analogy of the vine and its branches sets forth the doctrine that men can only bring forth the fruits of righteousness, by the mystic inflowing of His nature into theirs. Thus, "I am the vine, ye are the branches, * * * abide in me and I in you for without me ye can do nothing."

To every careful student of St. John's gospel it will be immediately clear that this inflowing of the Saviour's nature through our indwelling in Him,

is equivalent to our eating His flesh and drinking His blood, or to our drinking of the water that He shall give; to our believing upon Him, or to our being born with that birth from above, which alone can make us more than mere flesh,—a state in which we are at once blind to the kingdom and cannot possibly enter therein. So by whatever word we may choose to denominate man's natural state, his state apart from this gracious and mystical work of the Saviour, we are bound to admit two things concerning it:—First, that it is a state in which he is largely separated from God and blind to the Spirit's leadings. Second, that it is a state from which he can only be rescued by those amazing events, the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Thus the angels say of Jesus, speaking of His mission on earth, that He came to save His people from their sins. And He himself says, with fine irony, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The Gospels on every page glow with grace and hope for sinners, they offer no hope for those who trust in themselves that they are righteous.

Baptism is the sacrament of repentance and initiation; the Supper is the sacrament of atonement for sin and mystical union with the Saviour; these have been the central items in Christian worship from the very beginning, and have always been administered to all believers. Why this universality and emphasis, if sin is only an incidental fact? Emphatically, we assert the Bible never estimates it thus. Peter feels that sin is so essentially human, rather than incidental, that he charges a promiscuous crowd of "devout men" from every part of the known world with the guilt of Christ's death: "Him, ye by the hands of lawless men did crucify and slay." He says in Acts 2:23, and the Holy Ghost used his message; for we read that these men are pricked in their hearts by it. What Peter meant and what the Holy Ghost confirmed was not the criminality of those devout

men in the death of Jesus, but the fact that universal human sin, through the crimes of the men of Jerusalem, wrought that death. Those men on the day of Pentecost experienced the same shame and guilt as that to which Isaiah testified, "Woe is me for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." For Isaiah to be what he was and see the King, made him afraid; and for those Jews, whom Peter addressed, to be what they were, when the King came in the flesh, made them partakers in His murder. Certainly it is universal sinfulness, and not merely personal acts of transgression that lies behind these expressions. Concluding then our survey of the direct teaching of Jesus, we make this statement: it is no more possible to interpret the Gospels apart from the admission of man's natural and deep sinfulness, than it is possible to chart our earth on the hypothesis that it is flat.

Coming now to the Epistles of St. Paul, we can only take time to cover his statements in the briefest possible way. Romans 3:20-23, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." This is the apostle's conclusion at the end of his three chapter argument setting forth the depth and universality of sin, it certainly lacks nothing in definiteness.

Romans 5:12 is his parallel between Adam and Christ in which he asserts repeatedly, that by the one historic sin the whole race became sinners. We will pause here long enough to answer one possible objection. It is sometimes claimed that if this chapter teaches universal sinfulness through Adam, it also teaches universal salvation through Christ, and the latter more abundantly. We answer in three statements:

1. Universal salvation, in the sense of the final blessedness of all humanity, is repeatedly denied

in St. Paul's writings and in this very letter to the Romans.

2. Universal salvation, in the sense that our Methodism uses the expression, is taught here. Christ's atonement is actually universal, and His grace of regeneration is universally accessible through personal faith.

3. In any event, that which Adam lost by sin, was not the certainty of salvation, but the possibility of it; and this possibility is superabundantly restored in Christ.

In Romans 6:6 the apostle writes, "The old man is crucified, that the body of sin might be done away."

In Romans 7:5 he refers to a time when he himself and the Roman Christians were in a different condition from their present state of grace, in the words, "When we were in the flesh."

In Romans 7:14-18 he presents the fact of humanity's utter inability to keep the law of God, concluding with these words, "Now it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me; for in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." In this same connection he points out the fact that his inability was not intellectual; for he admired the moral ideal, rather it was human, he had no power to achieve it.

In Romans 7:23 to 8:2 he contrasts his powerlessness and hopelessness under the order of heart sinfulness, law and death, with the hope and strength that is his under the order of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

In Romans 8:5-10 he points out the contrast between "in the flesh" and "in the Spirit," and then marks the inability of the former to please God. It is the supernatural incoming of the Spirit of Christ that puts an end to this condition of moral impotency.

The biographical nature of these chapters in Romans gives them greater force, and especially so, when we realize how fully Paul, during the days of his flesh, had already pledged himself to love

and serve God and men. Yet in spite of what we know to have been his strength of nature, he gives it as his experience, that it was impossible for him in the days of the flesh to please God; for "the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be."

Beside this very thorough and reiterated statement of universal natural depravity in Romans, St. Paul makes numerous references to this truth in his other letters thus:

1 Corinthians 2:14. "Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto Him: and He cannot know them; for they are spiritually discerned."

Galatians 3:10 teaches such a sinfulness of nature as leaves man powerless and hopeless under the law. It also suggests that this universality of sin, by excluding pride in the repentant, is fundamental to the experience of salvation.

Ephesians 4:22-24 refers to the familiar distinction between man's two states, the flesh and the spirit.

Finally in St. John's great Catholic Epistle, in the first chapter, verses eight and ten, the apostle distinguishes clearly between sinfulness of nature and acts of transgression, asserting that both are universally true. Thus in verse eight he uses the words, "We do not possess sin," that is sinful natures; and in verse ten he uses the words, "We have not sinned," that is committed an act of transgression. Of the first class, he says, "They deceive themselves and the truth is not in them," and of the second class he says, "They make God a liar and His word is not in them."

There are various opinions among Christians as to which is the pre-eminent book of the New Covenant Scriptures. Some have chosen the Gospel according to St. John, others his great epistle, and others still St. Paul's wonderful doctrinal letter to the Church at Rome. But whichever among these three is chiefest, certainly they make up the great-

est group of New Testament writings: St. John's Gospel laying bare the inner consciousness of the Saviour, his epistle laying bare the inner consciousness of the saved, and St. Paul's letter to the Church at Rome giving to us a philosophy of Christianity as a world faith.

All the New Testament writings teach natural depravity; belief in this condition is the reason for their whole witness; but in these three, the greatest books, the doctrine finds formal and reiterated expressions. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," says Jesus. "Whoever says I do not possess a sinful nature, deceives himself and the truth is not in him," says St. John. "For the mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, and indeed cannot be; therefore they that are in the flesh cannot please God," says St. Paul. And now once again we state our conclusions as before: it is as impossible to interpret the New Testament apart from belief in universal natural depravity, as it would be to chart the world apart from belief in its spherical form.

IV.

THE BEARING OF HISTORIC CHRISTIANITY TOWARD THE NEW TEACHING IN ITS DENIAL OF UNIVERSAL NATURAL DEPRAVITY.

IV.

Having completed this hasty survey of the teaching of God's Word upon this fundamental Christian doctrine, we turn to the teachings of the Church. Beginning with Origen, about the earliest of the great post-apostolic fathers, and coming down to the present time, we find that the teaching of the Church through the ages has been faithful to the Scriptural position.

Origen, accepting the doctrine of natural depravity, explained it by the hypothesis of a personal sin and fall in a premundane life.

Tertullian taught that sin was inherited; he originated the words, "Blemish of origin," or "birth."

Ambrose taught that all sinned in Adam, and Augustine, generally recognized as the father of systematic theology, taught this in the most literal way, making it the basis of his defense of divine justice, in view of his other teaching, of an unconditional election to salvation or misery.

At the time of the Reformation the Roman Catholic doctrine as formulated by the Council of Trent, was as follows:—

1. Adam was created a perfect and free man.
2. He was endowed with holiness by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.
3. Adam, as the head of the race, included in himself all souls, so that all sinned in him.
4. His sin lost for himself and all, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and as a result, holiness of life. Beside this it made both Adam and all men guilty before God and in peril of eternal wrath.
5. The atonement in Christ, made individually efficient in baptism, washes away the guilt of original sin, leaving only the sinful bias of nature; which is not sin unless it expresses itself in a specific transgression of the divine law.
6. Man, as fallen, has still freedom of will sufficient to turn to God and lay hold on divine grace to salvation.

The Reformed doctrine differs from the Roman in three items. It holds that by the fall man lost all freedom, that depravity is a matter of guilt before God, that salvation is entirely by God's sovereign grace.

In addition to the Roman and Reformed theologies, the Reformation gave birth to another system of Christian thought known as Arminianism. Arminianism, called from the name of its founder, James Arminius, differs from the original Reformed theology chiefly in its rejection of the doctrine of predestination. It was first promulgated by Arminius about 1603, and was afterwards further developed and asserted by Simon Episcopius and John Uytenbogaert.

Arminianism, as a statement of the Christian faith, was popularized largely by John Wesley and those who labored with him in the Methodist movement; and inasmuch as this study is made from the point of view of a Methodist, it will be interesting to know not only what was the original Arminian position, but also what changes, if any, have been made in its teaching.

As a matter of fact the teaching of Arminianism on this subject is identical, no matter who may be the theologian, or in what century he may have written; and one single statement will be sufficient to express it, no matter whether one is thinking of Arminus, the founder, or of Wesley, of Watson, or of Pope, the great Methodist divines who made it a popular theology.

The Arminian position can be simply stated in 5 propositions:

1. Adam was originally perfect and morally holy, in the sense that as inspired by the Divine Spirit, he was able to fulfill God's law.

2. By sin he lost this holiness and became totally depraved, in the sense that his mind darkened, his desires depraved, and his will become refractory, he was utterly unable of himself to turn to God or do anything good.

3. This depravity, descended by natural gener-

ation from Adam to all his posterity; so that they too are by nature sinful, guilty, and entirely unable of their own powers to begin or perfect any good.

4. God has not, however, left men in this state into which the penalty of original sin cast them, but universally and always He has blessed them with the gift of prevenient grace. Thus He ever leads them to do good, and even while yet in this state of nature, causes them to be conscious of sin. He constantly inclines their hearts to repentance and faith.

5. Regeneration restores man to the original holiness lost by the fall, renewing his affections, enlightening his mind, and inclining his will to God.

The Arminian doctrine differs from the Reformed and the Roman, in that it does not impute to fallen men the guilt of original sin. It differs from the Reformed alone, in making prevenient grace a universal gift rather than a gift to the elect exclusively. And it differs from the Roman alone, in that it explains man's natural freedom and power to do good by prevenient grace, rather than by his own natural ability. There are one or two other minor differences between the Arminian and Roman doctrines, but we will not notice them.

Coming now to our own times, it is little more than twenty years ago that Dr. John Miley, late of Drew Theological Seminary, wrote his great book entitled, "Systematic Theology," and that this work was substituted for Dr. Pope's as an expression of the theology of Methodism. In these volumes Dr. Miley gives expression to a faith that is in all essentials identical with that maintained in common by the earlier Arminian divines. His differences are very minor, we notice two:

1. He locates the deterioration of human nature, through the loss of the Holy Ghost in man's conscience life and sensibilities alone, teaching that the will is only affected because man has lost the motivity of holiness.

2. He explains natural virtues, not by prevenient grace, but by the admission, that in spite of the fall human nature has some remnant of good in it.

In these two changes of the Arminian doctrine, Dr. Miley has moved from the Reformed toward the Roman position.

It is not eight years since Dr. Miley's work gave place to one by Dr. Henry Sheldon of Boston University School of Theology. The caption of the book is, "System of Christian Doctrine." The author is entirely faithful to the traditional Christian position. On page 312, discussing natural depravity, he writes, "The first trespass stands out as initiating that moral depravation, which is a general characteristic of the race." This he concludes to be the sum of the Scripture teaching on the subject. Later, when dealing with the fact of universal death, he writes, "Apart from the end of mere punishment, a race which had become heir to evil tendencies, and needed to be held back from excess of wickedness might be conceivably subjected to the restricting and discipling influence of mortality." (Page 315.) Here again the fact of racial depravity is frankly recognized.

Comparing Dr. Sheldon with Dr. Miley we find the only difference to be, that the former's statement is less thorough than the latter's. About the most recent comprehensive statement of Arminian Theology is by Dr. Olin Alfred Curtis in his book, "The Christian Faith."

This book differs markedly both in its theological vocabulary and in its point of view from the earlier statements of Arminianism; but its actual teaching, when thoroughly grasped, will be seen to be identical. The following brief citation will, I think, present Professor Curtis' view. (Pages 200-203.) "Every individual member of the race is born depraved, in the sense that he has lost the personal vision and intimacy of God. Of what was originally a rich, full moral life, only conscience, a mere fragment, is left; and this is

totally inadequate as a means of achieving moral organization. In the sense that man is totally unable by the simple power of his conscience to achieve a moral, personal organization, he may be truly said to be totally depraved."

Comparing Dr. Curtis with other Methodist authorities we find that he differs from Arminius, Wesley, Watson, and Pope, just as Miley did; and that he differs from Miley just as Sheldon does, namely he omits certain details, and satisfies himself with asserting a few bulk ideas.

Coming now to that which we have left until the last in our discussion of Christian authorities, the Church formularies, we find that the fundamental law of all the great Protestant denominations binds them to belief in the doctrine of universal depravity.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church, articles 7, 8, 9, 10, of the Articles of Religion, all either teach or else involve belief in this doctrine. The fullest statement is in article seven, where natural depravity is clearly stated under the caption, "original or birth sin." These articles were arraigned by Mr. Wesley, and are forever unchangeable.

In the Church of England, and in the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, the same formularies appear in the Thirty Nine Articles. In this collection they bear the numbers 9, 10, 11, 12.

The Reformed Churches have three standards of belief, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the confessions of the Synod of Dort. Of these three the Heidelberg Catechism is the actual standard for the American branch of the Church, and each minister is required to preach its entire scheme of doctrine through, once in four years.

We quote from this Catechism questions seven and eight, in which the doctrine of natural depravity is particularly dealt with.

"7. Question: Whence then proceeds this depravity of human nature? Answer: From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam

and Eve, in Paradise; hence our nature is become so corrupt that we are conceived and born in sin."

"8. Question: Are we then so corrupt, that we are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness? Answer: Indeed we are except we be regenerated by the Spirit of God."

In the Presbyterian Church the standard is their "Confession of Faith." And the law of the Church requires that all its ministers shall endorse this before ordination. Chapter six of the confession deals with the fall of man, and sections two and three in this chapter are as follows:—

"II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of the body."

"III. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation."

In the Lutheran Churches, the Augsburg Confession sets forth the faith of the denomination, and its ministers are required to sign that document before ordination. Article three in this confession is a statement of the Reformed position as to man's natural depravity.

In the Baptist Church, there is no close organization, ministers are not required to pledge themselves doctrinally before ordination; they do, however, write a confession of faith. Doctrinal infidelity cannot be punished by formal trial, but simply by the forced retirement from their associations of any minister or Church which transgresses the consensus of faith. The two confessions, which are most widely accepted by individual churches among the Baptists, are the New Hampshire, and the Philadelphia confessions; in each of these there is a strong statement of the familiar position on depravity.

Returning to the Anglican and Methodist article, let us notice it a little more particularly.

"Original or birth sin" is the caption, the text is as follows:—

"Original or birth sin standeth not in the following of Adam as the Pelagians do vainly talk, but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil and that continually."

The form of this article is fortunate; for the reference to the rejected teaching of the Pelagians, gives to it the great exactness that comes from a positive and negative statement of a position.

The Pelagian teaching rejected by our article can be expressed in four propositions:—

1. Man was created mortal, so that sin did not at all cause his death.
2. Original sin had no effect upon man's moral nature.
3. Its actual results were the loss of Paradise, and condemnation to a life of toil.
4. So far as posterity went, they were not involved at all. They each one begin life, morally, exactly where Adam did before his sin; and are only injured by his and others' sin in so far as they furnish a bad example and influence.

This teaching, originated by the British monk Pelagius in the fifth century, has been uniformly condemned and rejected by the Christian Church.

If it were not for the fact that we have long since learned to expect old mistakes to be redressed and advanced as new discoveries, we might be surprised at the great similarity between the new theory of preventive salvation, and the old and discredited Pelagianism.

The Pelagian denial that man became mortal through sin agrees nicely with the naturalistic and evolutionary sympathies of preventive salvation. The Pelagian denial of the fall, and its insistence that every man begins morally just where Adam

did, is closely paralleled by the new assertion that every man is born morally neutral. And the Pelagian conception, that the only evil consequence of the fall is the weight of a bad example and influence which came into the world through it, is certainly echoed in our modern emphasis upon environment, that is as blissfully ignorant of the depraved nature as Pelagius himself.

A single paragraph is sufficient to gather up our conclusions at this point.

The Holy Scriptures, the consensus of Christian teaching in every century, and the formularies of all the Churches are clear and emphatic in their statement of the native sinfulness of human nature.

The new theory of preventive salvation teaches that human nature has no native sinfulness, but that it starts morally neutral, and that it can be protected from falling into sin. Manifestly, such a teaching cannot be founded either upon the Christian Scriptures or upon Historic Christianity; and so far as the formularies of the Church go, it cannot be viewed as other than an open assault upon them.

V.

OTHER FAILURES OF THE NEW TEACHING FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF HISTORIC CHRISTIANITY.

V.

But in addition to its rejection of native depravity the new theory of preventive salvation differs from Historic Christianity in many details. A series of contrasted statements will bring out these differences clearly:—

1. According to the new theory, salvation is a matter of growth and education; it is an evolution, a development. In historic Christianity, salvation is essentially a rescue, a deliverance, a redemption. The very name by which the new theory is called is a confusion; for "prevention" and "salvation" are as essentially contrary, as a deathless life is contrary to being raised from the dead.

2. Conviction of sin has no place in the new program, whereas in the evangelical conception it is through the realization of sin that man's natural pride of heart is broken, and the first step is taken in the welding of the new race.

3. In the new program, faith is impersonal, it is something imparted by teaching during the years of early youth; in Historic Christianity on the contrary it is a definitely personal and moral act. In the new program faith has regard simply to God's general goodness, rather than to His Atoning and Regenerating work for the cure of sin, as in the historic system.

4. Again in the new teaching all the natural tendencies, even including pride and wilfulness, have their place in the final character. True, they are to be limited by inculcated habits and principles, and by the development of the "heart's natural spirituality"; but as so regulated they are useful traits. Here again there is a wide contrast as compared with the evangelical conception, in which the same natural tendencies are looked upon as depravity of heart that must be uprooted in the experience of repentance. And repentance is

to St. Paul, an experience of such significance and depth, that he likened it to the death of the body.

5. Again in preventive salvation the emphasis is put upon Christ the hero, the teacher, the exemplar; it puts little or no emphasis upon Christ, the atoning sacrifice, Christ the Almighty regenerator of heart. But in the New Testament, on the contrary, Christ is constantly the Redeemer, the Saviour from sin, and the word "hero" is not once used in connection with him.

6. Yet once again in the new teaching the great personal act is one of self dedication to love and serve God and men; whereas in the evangelical teaching it is an exercising of personal faith in the Saviour, with a peculiar emphasis upon His atoning death. We cannot mistake the contrast here. The act of self dedication, springs out of self conscious worth and power. The act of faith in the Saviour, springs out of shame and self hopelessness. The act of self dedication gives to God something that is worthy. The act of faith expects from God forgiveness of sin and spiritual renewing through the atoning death and risen life of the Saviour.

Finally the contrast between the two plans of salvation in their psychology is striking. Evangelical salvation is actually erecting a homogenius, welded brotherhood on the basis of certain deep and common moral experiences. The social consciousness developed within the Wesleyan revival movement, is one illustration of this efficiency in the historic gospel, and the relatively lower efficiency of the recent Wesleyan social programs to do the same thing, further emphasizes it. The psychology of the Gospel's social efficiency can be set out in four principal items:—

1. Conviction of sin and repentence breaks pride and puts an end to its divisive tendencies. Nor does the later experience of salvation renew them; for salvation is entirely apart from merit, by faith in the wonderous grace of God; consequently it does not stimulate pride.

2. The commonness of this deep experience of repentance, is the first basis for a perfect sympathy and mutual understanding among redeemed men.

3. The commonness of the wonderful experience of forgiveness, regeneration and adoption, added to repentance, is the sufficient basis for the complete unification of redeemed men into a new race or brotherhood. In every fundamental experience the race life is common, and so its perfect homogeneity and sympathy is secured.

4. Every attitude of every individual in his relation to the new race is intensely personal; it is never a habit, but always a personal bearing.

In contrast to these items under the plan of preventive salvation, pride is not crushed in any great experience of self despair and faith, but it is an integral part of the final character. Neither are there any great common experiences welding redeemed men into one. While impersonal attitudes of mind implanted in early childhood, as well as impersonal habits of conduct, have a prominent place in the finished character at which it aims.

Preventive salvation is thus seen to be an assault not only upon one of the foundations of Christianity, its belief in man's fall and need of redemption, but it is an assault upon the whole system; for even where it does not antagonize the Christian program it ignores it.

VI.

THE RISE OF THE NEW TEACHING AND A CHRISTIAN CONSTRUING OF THE FACTS UPON WHICH IT IS BASED.

VI.

The constant novelty of the new teaching may at first be a surprise to us, we wonder how anything so continually foreign to Christian thought could appear as a development of the Apostolic doctrines. But the new teaching is not a development of these doctrines, nor can it be related to them in any systematic statement of the faith. It is a product of naturalistic evolution, where this hypothesis comes into immediate contact with Christian faith, in the science of psychology, and more especially of religious psychology.

One very prominent exponent of the new program, a Sunday School editor, thus explains his sympathy with it: "I am not," he says, "an original investigator, I have simply taken the conclusions of secular scientists in this field, who have no theological bias, and made them the basis for my own teaching."

One such secular scientist, to whom reference is repeatedly made, is Dr. Edwin Kirkpatrick. The title of the best known of Dr. Kirkpatrick's works on this subject is, "Fundamentals of Child Study." In this book he has made a study of child life, and noticed a close similarity between the instincts of young children and those of animals. From this similarity of birth traits he concludes that these traits are all normal in children, and consequently cannot be marks of a fall. Dr. Kirkpatrick teaches that in early youth these instincts should be developed; for he says a proper strength of egotism and self-assertion developed in childhood has an important influence upon mature character. Later, during adolescence, he points out other instincts will appear, which will make it possible to limit and regulate those that were born with the child; and so to socialize his perfectly proper early selfishness and pride.

Christian Theology is perfectly willing to accept facts, and it makes no objection to Dr. Kirkpat-

rick's facts, but it must challenge his conclusions. Christian thought concerning human origins is quite indifferent as to whether or not the ground plan of man's nature conformed to the type of the highest animal life; the essential Christian item is that God made man something splendidly more than animals; and that included in this addition, was man's moral and spiritual nature, and his power personally to realize and fellowship with God.

As thus created man was fully able to organize his moral life, to make himself by a personal choice all that God meant him to be; toward God, a son; and toward men, a brother. Or, in other words, as created, man could experience the push of the organic motive: the sense of duty and love pressing him to a constant yielding of his whole freedom in joyous obedience to God, to live out His blessed will for him in holy love.

This ability to feel the push of the organic motive, and consequently the ability morally to organize his life is what Christian theology means by man's original holiness. The fact that by sin he lost this power is what it means by the fall. And the fact that his present state is one of moral impotency is what it means by natural depravity.

In its philosophy of depravity Christian theology has always put the emphasis upon the fact that man suffered a deep loss in his moral and spiritual nature, thus: Dr. Curtis says "when Adam sinned, he lost the inward consciousness and intimacy of God; and conscience, which is left to him, is but a fragment of his former rich moral and spiritual nature."

Similarly, Dr. Miley teaches that "depravity is by deprivation"; it is man's loss of the indwelling Spirit, a loss that has thrown his whole moral life into confusion.

If then, depravity should be held to be due to a deprivation of God's indwelling Spirit, it would manifest itself in exactly the phenomena Dr. Kirk-

patrick describes, namely, a similarity in instincts between animals and men.

The Christian thinker can admit that animals and men are very much alike, as to a certain ground plan of their being; and then, believing that man by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost was at first made something splendidly more, he can also believe that having lost this divine indwelling, he fell back toward the beast.

On such an hypothesis the renewed dominance of animal instincts in men, and the resulting confusion in man's moral life, would be the manifestation of what theology has called native depravity. The dominance of animal instincts would thus be, not a sign of incomplete evolution, as Dr. Kirkpatrick teaches; but rather of an awful loss man has suffered in his moral and spiritual nature. How perfectly such an interpretation of the facts answers to the very language of the Scriptures will be immediately felt, when now we read again such a statement as that of Jesus to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." In other words, man until reborn of the Spirit may be said to be little more than an animal.

The reply that the exponents of preventive salvation would probably make to this interpretation of the facts, would be: first, to point out that other instincts develop in the human individual, during adolescence, as a feature of his natural growth; and second, to make the claim, that since, when thus equipped the organization of character is possible, that it is therefore manifest mankind has suffered no deprivation, but rather that this low start and gradual unfolding must be regarded as the plan of his being.

Such a reply does not for a moment embarass the Christian thinker; for he denies the Christian worth of the character that can thus be organized. The motivity in all natural character is self-centered, and proud, and self-assertive on this basis. Such a motivity may be made to work out a cer-

tain refinement, and even benevolence of conduct, but it is no substitute for Christian motivity: it can neither organize the race, found the blessedness of the individual, nor bear the scrutiny of the holiness of God.

Thus, I will not steal, because to be a thief is unworthy of me; or, I want to be benevolent, because it is admirable, and I want to be what I admire. Either of these will illustrate man's natural motivity, either of them will promote social order, but neither of them is of any final moral worth.

The motivity recognized by the New Testament, is of course vastly different; we have already sought to define it, but perhaps a further statement will assist clearness.

Repentance, which stands at the very threshold of Christian character, is at once the end of man's natural motivity, and the foundation of his new moral life. The New Testament gives expression to that which is achieved through this experience in its phrases, "to lose oneself," and "to deny oneself."

The essential truth here is that the individual soul has now finally yielded up its inorganic motivity. Self in every sense has been wrenched out of the center of its life; and in place of the glory of pride, which so fills the natural heart, is a sense of deep poverty, a "destitution of spirit" that waits for the fulfillment of the Saviour's first beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

How fully our Christian poets have grasped this lowliness of heart, and put it into the hymnology of the Church; thus Mr. Wesley writes,

> "Jesus, the sinner's friend, to Thee
> Lost and undone for aid I flee."

and Charlotte Elliot writes,

> "Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
> Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
> Yea, all I need in Thee to find
> O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

And the sainted John Wesley himself, when at the very end of his wonderful life, seized the same great truth, in the words,

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."

First of all then a Christian character is one from which all personal pride has been removed, and which has become a bearing of lowliness.

Founded upon this lowliness is the rich and ever increasing bearing of faith. The full Christian ideal is that bearing of perfect Sonship, which Jesus expressed when he said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and to finish His work." And God has called us to enter into such a perfect communion with the Saviour, as that our hearts, first in-breathing His will, through faith, just as our bodies breath the air, shall afterwards live it out in word and deed.

Action for the Christian is controlled, neither by good habits, nor by noble principles, but by a personal bearing of faith toward the Saviour. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," said Jesus; and to have God within us, and His word living within us, so that we can love it and feel that to live it out is our meat and drink, this is the only Christian conception of character.

Christian character is thus seen to be a personal bearing from which all self worthiness, and self will are excluded, and in which the lowly heart, with conscious freedom, is forever yielding itself in passionate, joyous obedience to the Saviour through faith. How widely such a character differs from that which can be achieved naturally through education is apparent enough. The one is founded upon the instincts of pride, self will, altruism, etc., and upon the "natural spirituality of the human heart." It consists of a number of firmly fixed habits and principles of action suitable for the guidance of a life pledged to serve God and men. It is, and must be, a self centered

life. Christian character, on the contrary, is founded upon a denial of self, a yielding up of self, to receive from God grace and truth unto salvation and righteousness. It is a God-centered life. Said Jesus, "Except a man deny himself he cannot be my disciple." To illustrate the difference, natural character, as the exponents of the new programme hope to achieve it, may be likened to a building that had been erected block by block, that stands upon its own foundation, that is magnificent, and that at length, seeing itself, appreciates the beauty of what has been done in it and says, "This is worthy of me, I will be all this."

"But Christian character is," says Jesus, like the helpless branch of some mighty vine, that comes at length to see that in itself it is nothing; that then yields its proud self-sufficiency and puts all its strength into one long purpose of clinging. It dwells in the vine, it feels the flow of the vine's vital force, and quite simply brings forth rich fruit; not to the glory of self, but to the glory of God.

These statements have doubtless made sufficiently clear the distinction between Christian character and that which is naturally possible through the organization of man's birth and adolescent instincts; so that it is possible for the Christian thinker emphatically to assert two things: first, that natural religious development is not a substitute for spiritual re-creation; and second, that man's condition of moral helplessness, in the presence of the divine ideal, is due to natural depravity.

VII.

A CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF THE CHILD AND OF HIS RELATION TO THE CHURCH.

VII.

The next question that we want to consider in this study is the actual relation of the child to the Saviour and to the Church.

This question has been all along the objective of our study, and there can be only one answer to it; for unless we are to sacrifice the truth of freedom and moral responsibility, we must hold that the child is born a probationer on trial for moral beatification. To claim that he is born a child of God, because not having committed personal sin he cannot have forfeited the sonship that is his by creation, is simply to deny the whole Biblical doctrine of the fall and consequent depravity of man, for which we have been contending. To claim that he is unconditionally regenerated, or regenerated on the condition of baptism, is to deny moral responsibility. The only alternative then is that which we have chosen, to hold him a probationer, whose natural motivity is inorganic, and who is on trial for moral beatification.

As a probationer under such conditions the Saviour adequately described His relation to Himself in the parable of the lost sheep. He is one in the great multitude of marred lives, which the divine love in Jesus Christ came to seek and to save. Within this general fact, that the child is a probationary personality, is one peculiar fact, namely, that he has a relatively greater susceptibility to influence during youth. This peculiarity would warrant two conclusions: one, that the child is guarded in a peculiar way by divine providence during youth; and the other, that its relation to the Church, during the same time, is also in some sense peculiar.

But before developing this truth we must digress here for a moment to clear up one source of difficulty that is constantly confusing this discussion. The whole Christian Church is a unit in

its conviction as to the salvation of all children who die in early youth. It is unthinkable that any soul should be lost, whose sinfulness of heart has not been completed in a full denial of God, and in a denial of God that has gained objective expression in conduct; consequently we must think of the children who die in youth as having in some way won the crown,—but how?

The conception that all children are born in the Kingdom of God, and that they remain in it until by personal transgressions they have separated themselves from it, would provide an easy solution for the difficulty. But when we stop to consider the import of the suggestion, we see immediately its impossibility; for not only is it contrary to the teaching of natural depravity, but it is psychologically absurd. The central note in the Kingdom is personal holiness; by definition, therefore, no one can be in the Kingdom who has not holiness as a personal bearing. The new-born child certainly has a bias in its nature against holiness, but it as certainly has no personal bearing at all, holy or otherwise; it is consequently as absurd to speak of its being born in The Kingdom as to speak of its being born a scholar.

The peculiar difficulty of this question which every Arminian thinker must face has always been recognized. Dr. Watson puts it in a very frank way. He points out that in all salvation divine grace leads us to repentance, and assists us in the exercise of personal faith; only, as he reminds us, the faith that is exercised is personal, and therefore involves some measure of free decision. To find a place for this item of free personal decision is, he points out, the problem in construing infant salvation.

Having located the difficulty he makes no effort to explain it, but simply concludes that God's revelation is not a complete statement of His philosophy, rather it is only a revelation of the plan of salvation for intelligent, moral personalities.

Dr. Miley's position is about the same. He in-

sists that all children are born with depraved natures needing regeneration. As to how regeneration is to be provided for them, he merely says, "This regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit, and is a work provided for by the Atonement in Christ, as are all the offices of the Spirit in the economy of salvation." The fact that his treatment of infant salvation is in the section dealing with what he calls "the unconditional benefits of the Atonement," might be some warrant for claiming that Dr. Miley believed infant salvation to be a sovereign act of divine grace; but the position is contrary to freedom, the fundamental truth of Arminian theology, and it seems more probable that he merely meant to express his faith in the salvation of children who die in infancy and to admit his inability to explain its philosophy.

Dr. Curtis' effort to handle this difficult question is beautiful, and will certainly be a great help to many. It entirely meets the Arminian need for an exercise of personal freedom, and it is perfectly reasonable; the only criticism that can be laid against it is that it is not specifically taught in the Scriptures, and that in the very nature of things it can gain no support from human experiences. It would require too much space to set the view forth in any adequate way here, we must satisfy ourselves with the single suggestion that Dr. Curtis regards the death experience, the very instant of mortality, as the final probationary event in every life, infants included. He fully realizes that this view makes necessary a supernatural, instantaneous maturing of the dying infant's mind, and an infallible knowledge by God that every dying child will choose faith in that first probationary moment. But these two necessities are no difficulty for His thought: for the second, that of God's infallible fore-knowledge, is an admitted divine attribute; and the first, that of God's giving instant maturity to the dying infant's mind, involves only a daring belief in God's

supernatural power. To the careful thinker the giving of instantaneous maturity to an infant mind will only be so much more difficult than the instantaneous changing of water into wine, as psychology is more mysterious than organic chemistry. Dr. Curtis' view will not appeal to many minds but the least that can be said for it is that it is an interesting effort to clear up this difficulty in Arminian theology.

Returning now to the peculiar note in the child's relation to the Saviour and to the Church. A wonderful watch-care that fully recognizes and relates itself to the child's relatively larger susceptibility to influence, is all that can be meant in either case. It was just this wonderful watch-care of the Father over little children to which Jesus must have referred, when He said to His disciples, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father." "Not a sparrow falleth without your Father, fear not, yea are of more value than many sparrows." How great then must be the Divine watch-care over little children during those years of susceptibility; and not only over children in Christian lands, but over all children. With a tenderness that is infinite, with a concern that is immense, with a wisdom that is perfect, we must believe Divine Providence to guard in every land, and in every age, the little children,—and yet heathendom is midnight in sin, and Christendom is how shadowed. What an evidence is here of the fall and present depravity of the race.

The peculiarity of the child's relation to the Church is similar, it is simply the possibility of the Church's duplicating toward it some measure of the wonderful watch-care of God.

Is the child then naturally a member of the Church? To the Church invisible, the actual body of Christ, the child has no more relation than any other unholy probationary personality. It is simply a sin-marred life on trial for moral beatifica-

tion. A Christian motivity received through the renewing of one's life is the unalterable condition of membership in the body of Christ.

But to the Church visible, the organized Church in the world, the child should have the most intimate relation that is possible short of membership; but to give him membership itself, would be to deceive him. Baptism and something similar to the probationary membership of the Methodist Church expresses his relation, only he should be taught that his final full membership in the Body of Christ is conditioned not upon his remaining what he is, but upon his becoming, through regeneration, what now he is not, a holy personality.

The Church should put every possible influence about the child to protect him from the allurements of the world, and to press him toward repentance and faith, to teach the practical details of Christian life, to encourage their expression in conduct, to teach the beauty of the Holy God, and to emphasize the duty of loving Him.

All of these things are useful, they will help the child; only the Church, and everyone who exercises the teaching office in it, must fully realize the necessity not only for right conduct, but for a regenerate motivity. Right conduct may be the expression of a selfish heart; and as such, no matter how socially useful, from the standpoint of final values it is worthless.

The Church can do much for the child. How many people as they look back to their hour of greatest religious crises, can see that for them the enticements of sin were never exaggerated by the allurements of worldly pleasure? It is a gift of the Church to the child.

How many, too, looking back to the days of childhood can see how the very atmosphere in which they grew up held a constant emphasis upon the feeling that they owed their very hearts to God? It is a gift of the Church to the child. And again, how many remember of this same Christian atmosphere, the wonderful sense of hope that was

in it—the sense that when they gave their hearts to God He would respond in a gracious renewing of their motives, and of their whole being? It is a gift of the Church to the child.

And yet again, how many remember, when through faith those great new motives had been experienced, that at once they were able to express themselves in beautiful conduct? It is the teaching of their youth, the gift of the Church to the Child.

Yes, the Church can do much for the child, but it cannot protect him from the moral peril of his own natural motivity. Sometime, somewhere, the proud, self-centered wilfulness of the heart must be surrendered in an act of repentance. Sometime, somewhere, the whole being must be opened to the inflow of God in the act of faith.

And let no one say, "I never had such an experience," for to have had it and to have it is as much the human mark of a Christian as the baptism of the Holy Ghost is the divine mark.

The new-born infant began to breathe, every mother's heart will quicken at the memory of that first weak cry, and now it lives by breathing; how silly for the infant to say, "I never had such an experience," when to have had it and to have it is the condition of living. So, too, with the Christian, the day he does not breathe repentance and faith he backslides; for to be in Christ one must ever be both denying self, in the sense of personal unworthiness, and opening the heart to the inflow of God, in the bearing of faith.

What but this could be the meaning of the dying testimony of the greatest Christian saints? Take as an example Mr. Wesley's careful statement:

"I have been reflecting on my past life; I have been wandering up and down between fifty and sixty years, endeavoring in my poor way to do a little good to my fellow creatures; and now it is possible that there are but few steps between me and death; and what have I to trust in for salvation? I can see nothing that I have done or suffer-

ed that will bear looking at. I have no other plea than this,

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me."

Here is a clear sense of deep, personal unworthiness, and of faith in the Saviour as one's only hope, standing as the careful statement of one of the world's giant souls; and a statement made, too, when he realized himself to be at the very threshold of the Throne of God. No comment is necessary,—but we average men need to be very careful of our easy assurance as to personal worthiness. We have never yet been thus consciously near that Presence—sublime, awful, majestic.

VIII.

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ILLUSTRATING THE NEW TEACHING, AND ITS POINTS OF FAILURE, AND SHOWING ANEW THE DEEP AND ABIDING TRUTH OF THE HISTORIC FAITH.

VIII.

Dr. Bowne in his metaphysics insists often on the necessity of concrete thinking, if we mean to avoid the pitfalls of philosophy; and recognizing the wisdom of his insistence, our study ends with an experience. In doing this, however, we need to be on our guard against another danger, that of making experience a source of Christian doctrine. Experience is valuable, as an assistance in conceiving and illustrating the truth of God's Word; but it cannot be substituted for God's Word, as being in itself a source of Christian doctrine. The fallibility of man's whole moral and intellectual life is a sufficient reason for this position, and the numerous conflicting conclusions from experience is a sufficient evidence of man's fallibility. That experience of which, above all others, a man can speak of with authority is his own. Others may see deeds, but only God and our hearts can know and evaluate motives; consequently, instead of appealing to the many experiences of which we know more or less superficially, we will tell the story of one experience which we know thoroughly.

I was born in a Christian home of the Methodist type, and was brought up in the atmosphere of church life, prayer, and Bible reading. The family prayer circle is among my very early recollections. Mother did not believe in physical punishment, but whenever we did wrong she used to take us to her room and pray with us; consequently, my thought about sin, way back almost to my infancy, was that it was something very wrong that deeply grieved the good God. I cannot recollect the first time mother told me how untruth grieved Him, but it was before I was five years old. My earliest recollection of the sense of sin was in my sixth year; the occasion was a deliberate untruth told to avoid punishment for a disobedience. Mother

had forbidden us children sliding down the stone edging of the front stoop. I did it again, and fell, skinning my fore-head. To avoid punishment for disobedience I gave an untruthful explanation of the marks on my face. Mother believed me and I was not punished. I have other recollections of feeling mean and ashamed, but none that stands out definitely as this one does.

I remember distinctly my religious life in those days; it had quite a rich content but was lacking in the sense of reality. I believed the Bible was God's word but it meant nothing to me. I heard it read at prayer time, and mother often read it to me, but I never enjoyed it. Once when I was sick mother read me the story of Joseph. It interested me that afternoon, but it is the only early association of the Bible that has left a pleasant memory. I always said my prayers, and one night when father was hearing me I clasped my hands and looked up to be like a real saint. Father praised me for this but I never did it again. I used often to pray for lost top-plugs or marbles, but when I found them I never thanked God: for I did not suppose for a minute that He had helped me. Praying was for me no more real than my shrinking from counting funeral carriages; it was simply the feeling that if there was anything in either I was going to have the advantage.

Sunday was so faithfully observed in my home that the day has always had a peculiar loveliness for me, and even to the present time the calm of Sunday has a strange beauty that is rich in meaning.

Only two revival meetings during those early years made any impression; one in my sixth year, the other in my ninth. The first was only a scene to me, it meant nothing; the second I understood perfectly, and felt the appeal of the evangelist. I knew I ought to repent and surrender, I both wanted to, and did not want to go to the altar; but refused and tried to satisfy myself by postponing the duty till my twelfth year. A sister had been beau-

tifully converted at the age of twelve, and it had made a deep impression on my mind. It was, however, five years after this first refusal of salvation before I made any attempt to find the Saviour. Once or twice my heart was stirred with religious emotion, but most of the time I lived contentedly enough in selfishness and pride, often deceiving my family to gain some end I valued. The most marked recollection of these years is of the conflict between my desire for play and my ambition to make a success of life. I had a deep seated fear that I might be a failure; yet I would often look at my books crosseyed so as to make my eyes pain, that I might have an excuse to play rather than study. Always I went regularly to church and Sunday School, and much of the time to Junior Epworth League; but from twelve on I much preferred Church services because there seemed to be more in them. My first effort to find the Saviour was in my fourteenth year. My motive was fear of the divine judgment upon sin. The immediate occasion was a sermon by Dr. Talmage on the end of the world, which mother read to us from the Christian Herald one evening in the parlor. The motive was a fear of Christ's judgment on sin. No one had said anything to me but as I sat there listening to the sermon my heart was stirred and I determined to get converted that night. Consequently, I left the parlor, went to my room, got down on my knees to stay there until the experience of forgiveness came. After kneeling awhile I began to doubt that anything was going to happen, but decided to stay on, because it would be the easiest way of acquainting the family with my new purpose. It must have been an hour that I knelt there, and when at length I rose it was without any experience, but with a settled purpose to escape God's judgment on sin.

I joined the Church, and was regarded in that congregation as an unusually good boy; because the strength of my mother's character had fastened on my life a certain refinement that appeared

well. But during all those years from 14 to 20 I was actually a proud, dominating, self-centered youth.

As early as twelve my ambition was very strong. I began then to write a United States history, and persisted at the task for months. At 17 I began to write a Commentary of the Gospels; and I actually worked out, without ever having seen one, a harmony of the Gospels. I studied Isaiah through with a Commentary, memorized whole books of the Bible, mastered the outline of the Saviour's life so that I could tell both its events in succession, and also in what chapter the records might be found. I used to keep this reviewed, by repeating it on the street; for I thought that only constant application would insure any success in life. I remember, too, how in those days I used to stop tramps and drunkards, and reprove them on the streets, and how I used to exhort my companions about religion and about going to Church. But I did all these things for conscience's sake, because they belonged to my ideal of myself.

Two things alone in that whole period were morally real; one was my search for intellectual certainty concerning God and immortality, and the other was my effort to attain a Christian experience. For the first I gave up all light reading and devoted myself to philosophy, the best literature, and sermons. For the second I made myself a slave to duty. I had about given up all hope of anything supernatural, and had come to believe that approval before God was by moral obedience, and at the task of attaining to such an obedience I worked determinedly. Again and again I dared and sacrificed for duty. I used to keep a moral journal, and each night before retiring would make careful examination of the failures of the day, seeking to find their basic motive that I might wrestle with them fundamentally. I kept this diary three years, and wrote it honestly; I wrote it when for months together my heart was heavy with the agony of failure.

My greatest struggle was to fulfill the command of the New Testament, to love God and men. I was utterly unable to do either, and this law was like a sword that pierced my very soul. I admired the idea of God, but it was only an idea, a word that I used in my effort to understand myself. I had reasoned my way to theism, and God was the intellectual conclusion at the end of the argument, but He was unreal, and I could not love Him. In all my life God had never been truly real to me, not even in childhood; and when I came to young manhood, and lived amid its intense and expanding interests, God seemed to be only a name,—and who can love a mere name?

This is a very important point to keep clearly in mind—God had never been real to me. Very early in life I had a sense of that need for something infinite, to which Carlyle gives such tremendous expression in the sentence, "There is not enough candy and sweetmeats in the confectionery shops of Europe to satisfy the soul of one street gamin of the city of Paris." And as a lad of only thirteen years after returning from a children's party, I remember sitting down on the edge of my bed and struggling in real distress over a wasted evening. But the grief was from a sense of larger possibilities in me, a personal ambition that I was anxious to realize, and not at all from a sense of duty to God. God was only a name, that I was utterly powerless either to realize or love.

So, too, with loving men, they were never truly real to me. In their own separate interest I never realized them until I was nineteen. Before that companions were only necessities of my pleasure. I remember the startled sense with which, when as a lad of nineteen, riding on my wheel around the corner of 47th and Baltimore avenue in Philadelphia, I first truly saw that it was as hard for others to suffer and to fail as it was for me. All through those four years of striving, from my seventeenth to my twenty-first year, I did sacrifice for others, but the motive was always my ideal of

myself. During those same years also I used to read the moral philosophizings of Aurelius Antonius, Epicitetus, Emerson and others; and I enjoyed discoursing about them to my friends, as I did about altruism and justice; this was especially true during my seventeenth and eighteenth year.

Then I was a socialist and hated poverty, made a study of English Communism, and wrote quite a paper on the subject, "Communism the panacea for all social ills." I was conscientiously benevolent, and if on the street I ever went past a blind or lame beggar without helping him, conscience would invariably make me go back, sometimes one block and sometimes even two.

These are only a few items from the recollections of those days of moral striving. I had an ideal and was willing to make any sacrifice, except the Christian one, to enter into it. I was proud and self-centered, with a strong and clear sense of duty, and with large force of will: my problem was by my will to achieve an obedience to duty on the basis of a proud, self-centered motivity. I had no faith toward God, I had no love toward God or men. The atonement in the cross of Jesus was offensive to my sense of justice. I was convinced that Methodism was an excitement and a mistake.

I distinctly remember my resentment at a sermon preached by Dr. O'Hanlon on the sinfulness of the merely moral man. My creed was "I believe in the duty of loving." But before that creed I was a failure, and knew it. I sought to govern my thought and conduct by this creed, and hoped at length thus to achieve the renovation of my motivity. How plainly now I can see the hopelessness of what then was my hope. The difference between the branch, and the parasite that is growing beside it on the same tree, is this: the parasite is individual and the branch is social. The parasite uses the tree for its own ends; or conceiving it humanly, the parasite's motivity is individualistic, selfish; but the branch, on the contrary, belongs to the tree, they are organically one, the

branch's motivity is social or organic. My motivity in those days was like that of the parasite. Everything I did or tried to do had as its final aim a desire to be worthy before my own conscience, and at the judgment bar of God. I had divided the universe into two, myself and the rest of it; and I used the rest of it, God included, simply to satisfy myself. I was doing this even when I was sacrificing myself for duty. My natural motivity was parasitical rather than organic, and I was perfectly powerless to stimulate, within my heart, any organic motive.

I did not understand this then but how fully now I appreciate it. This is what St. Paul meant when he said, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God; for the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed is it able to be."

Before giving an account of how all this struggle and failure came to an end, I want out of justice to add a word of appreciation of my home. From earliest childhood I was taught that I belonged to God, and this teaching was sustained by a home life that was beautifully and simply religious. Family prayers, in which we children used to take part by reading in rotation verses of the Bible; the family pew in Church,—and we were all there twice on Sunday; family attendance at the Sunday School in which both our parents taught; family conversations on religion by mother; a family reverence for the Bible and the Lord's day. In our home no book ever lay on the Bible and no games were ever played on Sunday. I remember distinctly those Sunday evenings before supper when we all sang Christian hymns around the piano in the parlor. Such was the home in which I grew up. I would not claim for it that it was the best home a child could have, but I would claim this, that no graded lessons, and no expert in child training during the weekly hour of a Sunday School service, could have done for me what that home life did. It taught me the New Testament ideal, with a great emphasis upon the law of love

as stated in the Golden Rule. It impressed upon me the truth that I belonged to God. I was taught from infancy that my mother had given me to God to preach His Gospel, if He should call me; and that conception was never entirely out of my expectation. It taught me neighborliness, honesty, truthfulness, gentleness, generosity. It exercised me in right conduct, it utterly protected me from coarse temptations and from every fascination of worldliness. Yet it entirely failed to organize my life in Godliness and love, and it failed to do this even after my own will had fully endorsed all its ideals.

But returning, the end of all this moral striving and failure came very wonderfully and yet very simply. It is best stated in four experiences. The first was when I came to my limit intellectually. I was a student at Drew, and was passionately trying to master Christian doctrine. One afternoon while walking down the path to the lower entrance of the campus, I was trying to think my way through theistic philosophy, when suddenly a sweep of difficulty confronted and quite overwhelmed me. I suddenly lost all hope of explaining deity, and then for the first time realized intellectual limitations. I saw that a knowledge of God could not be intellectually attained, and I realized that if I was ever to know Him, it must be through faith. That moment was the first in which I had ever realized personal helplessness, and dared to rest in hope and trust toward God.

The second experience followed a Seminary prayer meeting. Dr. Curtis led. His theme was, "The centralness of the Redeemer in everything Christian." His emphasis confused me, I did not understand either the cross, or the centralness of the Saviour's person; my creed was, "I believe in the duty of loving." But my assurance had already been shattered by the previous experience, and I went out from the meeting to walk in the night and meditate. I do not recollect the progress of my thinking, save that I was trying to under-

stand sin, redemption, and faith. I was sad, sadness was then often my experience; the consciousness of failure had worn down my courage, and the sense of sin often uttterly overshadowed my hope. It was night, I was walking on the Seminary campus when suddenly, (I can go almost to the very spot, it was near the Cornell library toward old Asbury Hall, on a little path that runs diagonally toward Meade Hall), the burden of sin was lifted and there came into my heart a wonderful peace. My sense of relief was so extreme that it was almost physical. I stood up, I started to look behind me on the ground for the burden of sin that was gone; and then, realizing what it meant, I lifted my face and praised God with the cry, "O, there is no sin." That was the first instant in my life when God was consciously near me, the first instant when I felt His reality, so that I truly loved Him.

The third experience was a few nights afterward. I had gone to the prayer meeting of the local Methodist Church; at its close I came out and walking down to the stone posts at the Seminary gates, watched the other worshippers come out and go home. I felt the strangest new emotions. I watched them cross the road and climb up the bank on the other side. They were only dark forms whose faces I could not see, but I gazed at them and loved them; and felt I would be inexpressibly happy if only I could embrace them all, or in some other way express to them the emotions that filled my being.

The fourth experience was when, for the first time, I realized how this new emotion had come to overshadow all my natural feelings. It was on my second appointment, my first as a member of an Annual Conference. I was walking along the trolley tracks into the village; when I saw that I thought of mother less in the old familiar relation than as a fellow believer. The discovery filled me with fear, I did not at all comprehend it. That passage in St. Paul about those who had not nat-

ural affection came to my mind, increasing my fear; but in spite of these things I felt strengthened to trust and go on.

A careful study of this experience wonderfully illustrates the whole Christian doctrine of sin and regeneration. By birth I was proud and self-centered. By about six I had a definite moral life, and God had a certain reality, but only through the teachings of my parents. By nine I had felt the burden of sin sufficiently to understand a revival invitation. By fourteen I had a strong social sense, but while I wanted to do things among my friends, and for them, my motive was always self-centered. We can state the significance of the new social instinct thus: at six I enjoyed toys, at fourteen I enjoyed playmates and the dream of big responsibilities. The difference was simply in the instruments of my pleasure; at six it was toys, at fourteen it was other boys, and the sense of self-importance that comes with responsibility. At eighteen my conscience life was very strong, and I had my dreams of social reform, but even in this, self was always at the center. I wanted to live a life, and belong to a social order that satisfied my conscience. Now the thing that is perfectly apparent is that I was never able to feel an organic motive, and that I never did feel an organic motive until born from above, in that experience out of which flowed a wonderful filial love toward God, and a wonderful fraternal love toward men.

Here, once again, we see the psychology of salvation. Man's natural motivity is self-centered and therefore inorganic and sinful. Such a motivity can lead him to repentance and faith, but it cannot save him. The desire to flee from divine judgment is an inorganic motive, it is very far below righteousness, holiness, and sonship. But under the pressure of this motive the heart can yield up self-pride, in the act of repentance; and self will, in the act of faith.

Now the motive to repentance is, as we have seen, inorganic. It is a pressure of moral truth and

self interest against pride, and is entirely an individualistic concern; but when the heart yields to repentance it does it at the sacrifice of pride, and with this sacrifice the citadel of the individualistic and inorganic has fallen. Faith unites the organic and inorganic. The soul seeks itself, but it yields itself to gain itself. It comes to God in conscious moral failure, it cannot organize its life under conscience, it says to God, take me as I am, and make me what you will have me, only save me. "Only save me," is the intensely individualistic motive. "Take me as I am, and make me what you will have me", may not be an organic motive, but it is a yielding of one's heart to an organic work.

God's answer is to reveal, deep within the consciousness of the believing heart, a forgiveness mediated through the blood of Jesus, and to cause to be born there, the whole organic motive of sonship toward God, and brotherhood toward man. Beyond this experience of regeneration, the Christian's struggle is threefold, thus:

1. It is to maintain uninterruptedly the bearing of faith; for faith is the breath of the spirit, and to maintain faith at all is to progress in faith.
2. It is to press into an ever deeper understanding of God's truth; so that constantly more and more fully we may be able to appreciate the meaning of the new life born within us.
3. It is to gain expression for the new life in action; for while the slavery of the old is broken, and we can feel powerfully the strength of the new, we need to remember that the former motives still make a powerful appeal, and we are in much danger from them.

This fact of the persistent peril from our natural motivity is among the best answers that can be given to those who claim that a soul can choose the whole Christian bearing at the first dawning of moral consciousness, and from there on live consistently the life of sonship. So far from this being true, the fact is that the Christian or organic

motive only takes full possession of the heart very slowly and through striving; there is much that is proud, self-centered and individualistic, even in the lives of those who are far advanced in saint-hood. To claim, then, that a child can be trained clear of the fall, is simply to miss all the deeper moral facts of life. In this connection we want once more to insist upon the moral worthlessness of every act that is not personal. An act that is simply the result of some habit or principle has no more moral worth in a man than it has in a monkey or parrot. No act is morally worthy unless it is the expression of a morally organic motivity; so that no matter how useful conduct may be, socially, if it be found upon pride and self-assertion, it is morally worthless. The Christian motive or, as we have repeatedly called it, the organic motive, has been repeatedly defined. Repeating, then, it is a sense of duty and love pressing us to a constant yielding of our whole freedom in joyous obedience to the Saviour, to live out His blessed will for us in holy love.

From this motive every vestige of the individualistic and of the proud is absent, and it is not naturally possible; it is "The Kingdom" of which Jesus said, only those born from above can see it. It is worth while here again to remind ourselves that the program of "Preventive Salvation" is not aiming at a Christian character such as we have described. Their aim is, as we have before seen, a certain combination of the birth instincts, and those that develop during adolescence, with good habits and principles that have been inculcated by training. Their hope is to build a character objectively efficient in humanity and beneficence. They have caught the idea of a citizen, rather than that of a citizen who is a saint; from the Christian point of view both their program and their aim is superficial.

IX.

A FINAL WORD.

IX.

Men are wondering to-day at the achievements of natural science, and are asking what modifications these great new discoveries must make in Christianity. And I think the answer is clear. No human discovery ever has or ever will change one item in those truths of the Gospel that must be believed unto salvation. If Jesus Christ is not of the ages, He is not the Son of God, and there is no Gospel. And if after sacrificing His only begotten Son upon the cross, and raising Him from the dead, God Almighty did not sufficiently illumine His chosen apostles to enable them to conceive and express without error the essentials of the Gospel, the whole of faith is thrown into confusion.

Nothing could be more absurd than to believe in the Incarnation at Bethlehem, the crucifixion at Golgotha, the resurrection at the new-made sepulcher, the ascension at Olivet, and then to stop short of the Pentecost at Jerusalem. God Almighty, who can speak and it is done, never would have invested His Eternal Son in such a supernatural program of redemption as this one, and then have allowed the whole plan to be confused, and made ineffective, at the very beginning through His failure supernaturally to illumine and inspire His apostles.

The reliability of the New Testament, as a record both of the facts and of the philosophy of redemption, is as necessary to Christianity as the Theanthropic person of the Saviour; for without the providential record, the amazing Person would be both entirely out of reach, and wholly unreasonable.

Historic Christianity is not only wonderfully cohesive, it is an unbreakable unity; to deny any of its great items of faith is to destroy the whole. The resurrection and ascension of God's Eternal

Son from the dead presupposes His death. His death both presupposes the Incarnation, and together with it, demands an explanation. The explanation given by the Scriptures is the universal reign of sin and death within the race, from which reign, through the redeeming work of Jesus, we are to be delivered. But the universal reign of sin and death itself needs an explanation, it presupposes the fall of man through personal sin. Here is the beginning of the line, and starting here we can trace the whole movement of redemption.

We can see it clearing as we trace the progress of the race's history. We read its literature, always true, and yet always more nobly true. Century after century passes, prophet after prophet appears upon the scene, delivers his message, achieves his stage of progress and then passes on. At length we come to the climax, in the wondrous person of Christ, the Incarnate Word. He lives His amazing life, works His splendid miracles, He goes up to Jerusalem to die, He does die, He rises again triumphant from the dead, He ascends into Heaven,—but what does it all mean? For nineteen hundred years no one has known. This is the amazing position taken by some who claim to be the exponents of modern learning; from the beginning, they tell us, Christianity has been misconceived. True, the records say that Jesus chose, trained, and promised supernaturally to inspire His Apostles to be the ministers of His Gospel; but in spite of this inspiration, they misunderstood Him, and the Gospel they preached was from the beginning confused with their own traditions and prejudices. Nineteen hundred years had to roll away in confusion and failure, and the inductive sciences had to be discovered before this wonderful Gospel of "God in the Race" could be truly preached. And then when finally all this has happened and the Gospel is at last discovered, what is it found to be?

The answer is disappointing: for negatively the Gospel is found to be the denial of the most funda-

mental fact in the whole Redemptive movement, the one fact which made it all necessary, namely, the fall of man, and the consequent depravity of everyone born in the race. In other words the Incarnate Word is stood at the climax of a series of misconceptions. He comes not to fulfill the law and the prophets but to correct their mistakes.

And positively, it is equally disappointing; for in actual emphasis it is found to be only Christ, the supreme man, the supreme hero, the supreme teacher, the supreme exemplar. Christ's great service to the race was His teaching of the two doctrines of the brotherhood of man, and the Fatherhood of God. Certainly we are to understand that His teaching of them was not simply by word of mouth, He taught them also by the example of His beautiful life, and the heroic faithfulness of His awful death; but it is His ministry of teaching that is the significant thing; his office as the Redeemer from sin by the sacrifice of His cross is hardly regarded at all, and as a racial necessity it is really denied: for in the programme for making children Christians, the emphasis on sin and repentance is not only omitted, but children are to be guarded against gaining even a chance acquaintance with these ideas in the meetings for adults. In other words, instead of an almighty Saviour from sin, the perfect answer to the world's whole moral problem, we find that Christ is only a new edition of the Decalogue, improved and illustrated. This new Christianity, discovered in the twentieth century, is not really Christianity at all. It is no more Christianity than the Unitarianism of the eighteenth century was. There is not, there cannot be any other Christianity than that which is historic, and if there is to be any Christianity in our century it must be the historic faith.

We would by no means be guilty of belittling the splendid achievements for humanity of the natural sciences, they are innumerable, but they

have their sphere. No scientific induction will ever change, or even increase our certainty of the trueness of the so-called axioms of thought. And so, too, with the whole realm of subjective certainty, it is deeper than any truth inductively attained. God, duty, Eternal Life are subjective certainties, and those who feel and know them are consciously in touch with final truth, truth that is entirely independent of any inductive study of it. A dentist may know the physiology of a patient's pain, but it is the pain itself that the patient knows, and this is a certainty deeper than its physiology. The power to love is entirely independent of a knowledge of its physiological basis; the artist's power to portray in color is entirely independent of a knowledge of the mechanics of light; and the soul's consciousness of relation to God, duty and Eternal Life is equally independent of any knowledge of the psychology and physiology upon which it is based. The Prophets and Apostles knew nothing of the mechanics of that machine we call the soul, but their souls worked, giving us a progressing revelation of spiritual verities that came to its crown in the New Covenant Scriptures. Our modern discoveries have not affected the trueness of Angelo, Raphael or DeVinci; they have as little affected the trueness of St. John and St. Paul.

Many a man can run a motor car, who cannot construct one; but religion is concerned with the running of a soul, and not at all with its manufacture. Science can raise the question of fact; it can ask whether such men as the apostles ever lived; whether the texts of their reputed teachings are authentic; it can raise any question of fact concerning them, and must be heard with interest. But to assume that our modern knowledge of the mechanics of life and things has increased our power to live; to assume that our modern knowledge of objectives, makes us more capable in subjectives; to assume that a modern man, because of his scientific attainments, can love more deep-

ly, and feel more keenly, in art, poetry, and faith is simply unwarranted arrogance. The twentieth century has gained through science no superior spiritual point of view by which to measure the divine wisdom that was in the first, and modern science can add nothing to the spiritual verities that came to us from there. Science can no more add to the faith of God Incarnate the Redeemer than it can to the beauty of the stars, both are complete, the perfect expression of the wisdom of God. And to get this faith into our age is the age's supreme need and the Church's supreme task. Today men are calling upon the Church to put her ear to the ground and catch the wisdom of the age, but how much more she needs to put her ear to the sky and catch the wisdom of the ages.

And measured by the wisdom of the ages this new teaching is certainly in error. It is contrary to the very genius of the great Protestant Reformation; for it is a system of salvation by character rather than by faith. It is contrary, too, to the fundamental history of Methodism, and of the whole great evangelical movement which Mr. Wesley started; for it ignores the one fact that underlies it all, John Wesley's own wonderful conversion. The Sunday-school that undertakes by training, environment and suggestion to put more spiritual and moral power into a life than Suzanna Wesley was able to put into the lives of her sons, John and Charles, has a task before it; yet her training left them far short of being experiencial Christians. The Sunday-School that hopes to win from adolescent youths a fuller self-dedication to love and serve God and men, than that which turned John Wesley's life into a science of self-sacrifice, has a task before it; yet John Wesley himself witnesses to the slavery of all his sacrifices, and to their Christian worthlessness.

The careful student of Christian Psychology finds nothing confusing either in Wesley's or in Luther's experience. The tremendous moral

problem is not to get untruth and unchastity out of human lives, but rather to get out of them their proud, self-centered wilfilness. We must lose ourselves to find ourselves. Jesus said, "except a man deny himself," that is disown himself, he could not be His disciple; and to get men to do this is the tragically difficult thing. Paul the Pharisee was neither untruthful nor unchaste, but he was proud and self-centered even in his effort at goodness, and Wesley and Luther were the same. Thus, Wesley, went all the way to Georgia to preach to the Indians, but not because he loved the Indians, and not because he loved the Saviour; he went because he wanted to do something that would merit salvation. All through the years of his spiritual confusion, he was seeking to achieve salvation, to merit it; what he needed was to lose his pride and self-sufficiency in utter self abasement; he needed to "disown himself" as a guilty sinner and put all his hope in Jesus the Saviour of men. And when he did this Jesus met him and saved him, just as he always saves those who come to Him in repentance and faith. "I felt my heart strangely warmed within me * * * and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and had saved me from the law of sin and death." These are the words in which Mr. Wesley himself describes his conversion, and lo they are the typical words of all Christian experience. It took Mr. Wesley twelve years of passionate seeking to come into this experience,—why? There can be only one answer, it took him twelve years to unlearn the mistaken conceptions of salvation he had learned in his youth; twelve years to discover that salvation is not in principles of conduct, habits of action, and programs of service for men; but rather that it is a free gift of God's grace through faith.

And now, finally, let us reiterate it is not the wisdom of the age, but of the ages in which we trust. The Church has often passed by that which has called itself new truth. Deism held itself to be new truth in the seventeenth century, but the

Church passed it by. Unitarianism held itself to be new truth in the eighteenth century, it held itself to be the very flower of culture, but the Church passed it by. But the Protestant Reformation, the greatest movement of modern times, and the fount of our civilization, came not as new truth, but as the rediscovery of old truth, the rediscovery of Apostolic Christianity; this the Church embraced, and unto what lasting joy.

So it was, so it is, and so it must ever be; Historic Christianity is the only Christianity, it is "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints." It has not been given to our age to discover a new faith, or to improve an imperfect faith but to be the apostles and ministers of the perfect faith of Christ, and to repeat with all the Christian ages our glorious common creed:

"I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God; begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God; begotten and not made; being of one substance with the Father: By whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man; And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father; And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spake by the Prophets: And I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church: I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins: And I look for the Resurrection of the dead; And the Life of the world to come. Amen."

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